



Above, 2nd Lt. Sarah Cantrell, performs “I Believe,” during the opening act to the near capacity crowd at the University of Nevada Las Vegas’ Artimus Ham Concert Hall Tuesday. The Tops in Blue

2000 performance centers around the “If You Believe” theme. Right, Nellis’ Honor Guard opens the show with the traditional posting of the colors.

Tops in Blue

**By Ms. Monique Staskiewicz
AWFC Public Affairs**

Before the lights went out, pre-shouting good wishes came from behind the stage curtain. Tops in Blue performed to a near capacity crowd at the University of Nevada Las Vegas’ Artemus Ham Concert Hall.

The stage lights turned on and an official welcome was presented by Chief Master Sgt. Toney Beatty, Air Warfare Center command chief. A proclamation that Aug. 8, is the day to honor Tops in Blue was also given by a spokesperson for Nevada Governor Kenny Quinn.

A kaleidoscope of colors filled the stage, trumpets sounded, and the audience began a journey into the land of make-believe. A magical center stage door became an outlet for kings and queens, cowboys and cowgirls, jazzy harlequins and enchanted animated characters.

The accelerated uniform choreography colored the stage with fast side-to-side hip movements from the women who threw their high-powered voices into the air. Singing in acappella harmony, the men caused even more hoots and hollers from the enthusiastic audience.

Highlights from the perfor-

mance were soloist Senior Airman William Johnson, 16th Logistics Support Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., wearing a white top hat and tails, who powerfully sang “If you Wish Upon a Star.” Together, Airman 1st Class Paige Thacker, 100th Security Forces Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, England, with Senior Airman Fernando Alejandra, 96th Communication Squadron, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., performed a dramatic Spanish love duet.

Live musicians constantly entered and exited from rotating sets. 1st Lt. Eric Cameron, Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., parodied Louis Armstrong by echoing throughout the theater a trumpet solo without taking a breath. Accompanying musicians consisted of two drummers, two keyboarders, two base guitarists, and the brass section having a saxophone, clarinet and trumpets.

A friendly cowboy performer gave the winning names from the \$200 in AT&T phone service and \$200 Army and Air Force Exchange Service shopping spree drawings. A silver studded choir then joined him and the performance continued with foot stomping jumping that shook the sets.

The audience clapped along to, “When the Saint Go Marching In,” and swayed their hands to an upbeat Spanish song prompted by the vibrantly dressed Tops in Blue performers.

The positive energy and patriotism grew when Tops in Blue sang, “God Bless the U.S.A,” in their dress blues. To show appreciation, the audience stood during the performance before thunderously applauding.

After the show, the performers stayed to sign autographs and greet the audience in the lobby.

Performer, Airman Thacker said, “to reach so many people all over the world and bring America to other countries makes performing with Tops in Blues worth it.”

“It was Air Force all the way,” said audience member, retired Corporal Virginia Woodward, one of the original 87 women to join the Air Force in 1948. “It was great!”



Photo by Airman Kenneth Kennemer



Top, the horn section of Tops in Blue preforms a jazz and brass musical ensemble for the thrilled crowd. Above, deep baritones and the smooth bass of the men of Tops in Blue is highlighted in this barbershop-style presentation.

